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Security Council

Sixty-third year

Provisional

5979th meeting

Tuesday, 23 September 2008, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Compaore/Mr. Yoda	(Burkina Faso)
Members:	Belgium	Mr. De Gucht
	China	Mr. Liu Zhenmin
	Costa Rica	Mr. Urbina
	Croatia	Mr. Sanader
	France	Mr. Kouchner
	Indonesia	Mr. Wirajuda
	Italy	Mr. Frattini
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Ettalhi
	Panama	Mr. Torrijos
	Russian Federation	Mr. Yakovenko
	South Africa	Ms. Dlamini Zuma
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Lord Malloch-Brown
	United States of America	Mr. Khalilzad
	Viet Nam	Mr. Le Luong Minh

Agenda

Maintenance of international peace and security

Mediation and settlement of disputes

Letter dated 3 September 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Burkina Faso to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2008/590)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

08-51564 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Maintenance of international peace and security

Mediation and settlement of disputes

Letter dated 3 September 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Burkina Faso to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2008/590)

The President (*spoke in French*): I am very pleased to welcome the heads of State or Government, ministers and other representatives participating, together with the Secretary-General, in this high-level meeting of the Security Council. Their presence is an affirmation of the importance of the subject matter to be addressed. I would like in particular to welcome the presence of the Secretary-General.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi.

It is so decided.

I extend a warm welcome to Mr. Brahimi.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. I wish to draw attention to document S/2008/590, containing the text of a letter dated 3 September 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Burkina Faso to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a concept paper on the item under consideration.

I shall now introduce the debate and make a statement in my national capacity.

The conflicts afflicting regions throughout the world require all States, organizations and citizens of our planet to resolve them through effective mechanisms. In inviting participants to this high-level meeting on the topic "Mediation and settlement of disputes", we sought to highlight the need to use peaceful means as the method of choice for the settlement of disputes. I would therefore like to address my sincere thanks to all here for having answered our invitation. Their presence attests to the interest they attach to the deliberations of the Council as the organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security and the need to settle disputes by peaceful means. I am particularly grateful for the diligence with which they agreed to come and share their respective experiences.

I am convinced that, by the end of our discussions, we will have a convergence of views on our ongoing search for peace through peaceful means. I call upon the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Secretary-General, regional and subregional organizations, and civil society to draw on that convergence for inspiration in a world where the smallest crisis can become a real threat to international peace and stability. The new dimensions of ideological conflicts and the heightened complexity of current conflicts require us to resort to the most innovative and ingenious mediation strategies.

With respect to today's theme, I would like to share a number of considerations that I believe are vital. I have had the weighty responsibility of assisting through mediation a number of African countries in crisis in their quest for peace and stability.

I hold to the conviction that no mediation, no matter how selfless and enthusiastic, can succeed without the full participation of the protagonists. Moreover, the mediator must remain objective, independent and impartial and have a solid knowledge of the specifics of the conflict, in particular those relating to the major actors in the crisis and the sociological realities of the countries and the region concerned. That is where the role of regional and subregional organizations is fundamental. They can contribute effectively to the settlement of disputes through close mediation, given their knowledge of the situation on the ground and in their capacity as the primary beneficiaries of restored peace.

That is the spirit of Security Council resolutions 1809 (2008) of 16 April 2008 and 1625 (2005) of 14 September 2005, on cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations and on strengthening the effectiveness of the Security Council's role in conflict prevention, particularly in Africa. The comprehensive implementation of the relevant provisions of those resolutions would energize regional and subregional mediation efforts. The responsibility of the international community must not go unnoticed. Bilateral and multilateral partners must

be proactive in any mediation process by promoting the leadership role of the mediator and supporting each step of the process in a timely and appropriate manner.

In that regard, the United Nations and especially the Security Council can and must play a critical role. I therefore welcome the proposal made by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to strengthen the capacities of the United Nations in the area of mediation. Our major expectation is to see the Council become more invested in that endeavour.

In drawing lessons from our ongoing experience, I can say that progress made in implementing the Ouagadougou Political Agreement on the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire is due largely to the firm commitment of the signatories of the Agreement, the unfailing support of the Security Council and the Secretary-General, and the eager willingness of countries and institutions to support our efforts. I take this opportunity to reiterate our deep appreciation to all and to express the hope that this exemplary mobilization will be maintained until the end of the process.

Mediation requires confidence and ongoing coordination between the mediator, the parties to the conflict, local actors and all partners. Such an environment has helped to strengthen ownership of the peace process by the main protagonists in Togo, thereby creating conditions for a return to harmony and reconciliation.

The current evolution of the ongoing process in Côte d'Ivoire confirms that vision. In fact, the close cooperation between the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the Facilitator of the Ouagadougou Agreement allows the Facilitator and the United Nations to be fully informed of the situation and to be confident that the crisis will be resolved.

In our experience of crisis mediation, three essential elements should be highlighted. The first is undoubtedly the importance of ownership by the major parties of the process to resolving the crisis. The success of any mediation presupposes the ongoing commitment or the parties to the conflict to implementing diligently the contractual provisions that they have signed.

The second element is that the final document must satisfy each protagonist and provide answers to fundamental questions regarding the onset of the crisis, while remaining faithful to principle of even-handedness.

The third element is the need for any peace agreement to envisage appropriate follow-up mechanisms that will allow the parties to gradually overcome the many obstacles that could undermine the peace process. The full participation of the protagonists in the mediation process and the implementation of follow-up mechanisms require the mediator to remain usefully available to help and to listen as a guide, go-between and neutral representative of the international community. In addition to serving as follow-up and coordination tools, follow-up mechanisms can be true frameworks to strengthen dialogue and confidence among the actors.

The many and diverse mediation initiatives in one conflict raise the crucial question of how to harmonize and coordinate them. The main organizations and personalities concerned must work to establish common or coordinated mechanisms in order to ensure the synergy of actions taken and to avoid counterproductive use of energies.

I therefore welcome the joint efforts of the United Nations and the African Union to find sustainable solutions to the crisis in Darfur. The recent appointment of a Joint Mediator attests to the resolve of the international community to put an end to the tragedy on an urgent and ambitious basis.

Maintaining peace and security throughout the world requires an international environment conducive to the emergence of a culture of ongoing, structured and dynamic dialogue to ensure the more effective prevention of conflicts and above all, their timely management and resolution. On that basis, a peaceful approach is necessary in settling the disputes in the Near and Middle East, the Caucusus, and a number of African countries that are facing insurgencies or post-electoral violence. Therefore, Burkina Faso has requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Council a report on the value of mediation both by the United Nations and by regional organizations.

I express my deep appreciation to all delegations for the support they have provided for the draft statement submitted by Burkina Faso recognizing our deliberations. Beyond what conflict settlement mechanisms have to offer us, it is more important than ever for human societies to reaffirm the supreme values of tolerance, solidarity, dialogue and peaceful

coexistence that are the foundation of a healthy and strong international community. It is therefore my hope that the discussions on mediation that Burkina Faso has sought to promote will continue and grow, and especially that we will develop more effective conflict-prevention mechanisms in furtherance of a fair and peaceful world.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I invite His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, the Secretary-General, to take the floor.

The Secretary-General (*spoke in French*): I commend the Republic of Burkina Faso for organizing this important debate. There is no nobler mission for the United Nations than helping to settle conflicts by peaceful means. On numerous occasions the United Nations has shown that it is capable of helping parties to find specific solutions to their disputes. The situations that are most frequently discussed are those that culminate in a comprehensive peace agreement. Often they lead to a United Nations peacekeeping operation. At times, we are obliged to deploy peacekeeping troops rapidly in order to save lives, even before peace has been restored. In such situations vigorous mediation efforts are indispensable to prevent further bloodshed and to ensure that the Blue Helmets are not deployed indefinitely.

We talk less of other situations where discreet diplomacy has enabled parties to resolve a dispute before conflict breaks out, thus helping the countries and the international community to avoid the loss of countless human lives among civilians and soldiers, as well as considerable expenditure.

Today, I ask the Council and all Member States to invest further in our mediation activities, so that we will be better able to exercise that discreet diplomacy and find ourselves less often facing that Rubicon, the crossing of which inevitably leads to unspeakable suffering and enormous expenditure in terms of peacekeeping.

(*spoke in English*)

The United Nations does not claim a monopoly on the settlement of disputes. Very often we play a supporting role while regional players take the lead, as in Kenya and Zimbabwe. Increasingly, our regional partners are asking us not only to support them in specific cases but to help them build their own mediation capacity, which we are gladly doing.

The Security Council plays a central role in mediating and settling disputes, as laid out in Articles 33 and 36 of the Charter. From experience, I believe that its most important contributions come when it is unified. A successful outcome is most likely when the Council agrees on common principles for solving the conflict. Conversely, risk of failure is high when there is no common vision or when Council members and other key Member States hold contradictory positions.

The Council's second most important contribution is when it is prepared to use its leverage. The Council has had a positive impact on peace processes when it has used, or been prepared to use, its leverage. Targeted sanctions greatly supported the mediation efforts in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Angola.

The third contribution is when the Council supports one clear chief mediator. By authorizing the mediator with the best comparative strength for a particular situation or a particular phase of the process, the Council greatly enhances the chance of success. While the mediator must consult all concerned parties, he or she must be fully supported by all partners. Competing mediators only encourage forum shopping.

The fourth contribution is when the Council gives the process space, if that is what is needed. Once the Council has agreed on a strategy, it is often important to allow the mediator space and time to work with the parties. The Security Council, neighbouring countries, groups of friends and Member States must stand behind the mediator in support of a chosen strategy.

My own good offices are always on offer to parties that wish to avail themselves of an honest broker, who can help them stay or return to what is sometimes a difficult path to peace. That role, which successive Secretaries-General have played in cases such as Iran, Iraq, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nigeria, Cameroon and Afghanistan, is a critical tool for the international community in settling a dispute. Such good offices can be useful when intergovernmental bodies are deadlocked or the parties actively resist intergovernmental involvement. In 1997, the East Timor question was resolved when Indonesia accepted the offer of the good offices of the Secretary-General to mediate.

Many peace processes have benefited from the ability of the Secretary-General to speak to all relevant parties, even when no other actor was willing or able to take such an initiative. Often those efforts appear neither on the Council's agenda nor in the press. They are undertaken discreetly by my envoys or by United Nations staff. That low visibility often achieves success, but it comes at a price for the Organization. Very often we struggle to convey to a sceptical world the breadth and depth of our efforts.

Pursuant to the 2005 World Summit Outcome (General Assembly resolution 60/1), a small Mediation Support Unit (MSU) was established within the Department of Political Affairs to provide operational support to peace processes and be a repository of knowledge for mediators. In 2008, the MSU established a stand-by team of mediation experts that can be deployed anywhere in the world in a matter of days. In the first half of 2008, the MSU provided support to some 15 peace processes. It is also supporting the Southern Africa Development Community, the Economic Community of Central African States and the African Union to strengthen their mediation capacities.

However, the funding for MSU in the regular budget is meagre, and MSU has no funds for programme activities. Without prejudicing the role of the General Assembly in deciding budgetary matters, I urge the Council to ensure that mediation efforts have the requisite resources. Past experience suggests that an effective and coordinated mediation effort throughout the conflict cycle is necessary for effective peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Thus, it is critical that the Security Council provide the same support to enhance the structures, processes, tools and resources required for mediation as for peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities.

I am grateful for this opportunity to share some thoughts with the Council and look forward to working closely with all Council members in that important endeavour.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Secretary-General for his statement. I now give the floor to Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi.

Mr. Brahimi: I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for inviting me to address today's open debate. It is a great honour indeed and a particular pleasure to speak during the presidency of a distinguished President from Africa.

Our continent, Mr. President, has had more than its fair share of conflicts. Some of those have been resolved, and in other cases the situation has improved. But there is no room for complacency. Far too many of our people are being killed, tortured, harassed, humiliated or sent into exile or internal displacement. Much remains to be done in Africa to end conflict, consolidate peace and create the conditions for sustainable development.

The United Nations is doing its part. Witness the deployment of over 100,000 peacekeepers in some 18 missions — the largest share of them on the African continent.

Regional organizations, including the African Union, have acquired remarkable skills in the field of mediation. They are creatively developing their own cooperation, amongst themselves, with civil society and with the United Nations. A few Governments, some non-governmental organizations and a number of individuals have also successfully mediated conflicts throughout the world and continue to do so.

The United Nations, meanwhile, remains the leading actor in this field. In the course of its history, it has achieved many successes, but it certainly can improve further, as members of the Council and the Secretary-General know far better than I do.

There are several principles at the heart of United Nations mediation, all of which deserve careful attention. Straightforward and uncontroversial as these are, it is quite challenging to adhere to them in practice. For example, I believe that the mediator must understand a conflict in all its complexity before passing judgement and taking decisions. He or she should recognize the importance that culture, tradition, pride and even saving face play in all phases of the process.

In the short time available, I shall focus only on two of those principles.

First, the mediator should include in the peace process all the parties to the conflict without any exception. At the Afghanistan peace talks held in Bonn in 2001, we were under immense pressure to conclude an agreement in just a few days, and it was not possible to pursue a genuinely inclusive political process. Political realities demanded that. But we also failed,

later, to reach out to many constituencies who might have joined the political process if they had been asked. It should have been clear to us, all along, that those who were absent or kept away would have no stake in the success of the agreement and would obstruct its implementation, and that is exactly what they have done. President Karzai and the United Nations pleaded for an expansion of the International Security Assistance Force, early on, fearful as they were of how vulnerable the peace process would be to violence waged by those excluded from it.

In Iraq, Darfur and elsewhere, and in Afghanistan, the obstacles to a durable peace will not be overcome by military means alone. A variety of other tools are equally, if not more, important. These include far more tangible economic benefits for ordinary people and intensive, ongoing mediation with all concerned.

It goes without saying that a mediator should never act to placate his or her own ego, play to the media, or prioritize the interests of external actors. Rather, the mediator should put the concerns and aspirations of the people — all the people — of the country concerned at the forefront. In the case of Afghanistan, the interests of the Afghan people should override those of the United Nations itself, those of NATO, those of the neighbours and those of any other country. If the interests of the people of Afghanistan are thus served, exclusively and properly, we will see that everyone else's interests will be very well served indeed.

But let there be no misunderstanding here. That a mediation should be inclusive and involve dialogue with all parties does not mean that any offence, by anyone, should be condoned or ignored. The outrageous, sickening, criminal destruction of the Marriott Hotel in Islamabad, just a few days ago, has been rightly condemned by the whole world. I happen to have known some of the victims. They were the doormen, the waiters, the cleaning ladies and other staff of the hotel. They were poor, honest, dignified men and women. All of them were Muslims, working hard to provide for their families. No perpetrator of such an act can claim to be an adherent of Islam, let alone to be acting in its name. Attacks of that nature are cold-blooded mass murders, period. The criminals behind them must not go unpunished.

I will now move on to the second key principle, if I may. The mediators' hand is significantly strengthened when the principles and approaches he or she adheres to in conducting the mediation are seen to be supported by all the members of the Security Council and the membership of this Organization as a whole. That means, in particular, that there must be only one channel of communication with the parties. In mediating the post-election crisis in Kenya, Kofi Annan insisted firmly that no one else interfere, and Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon fully supported that approach. Kofi Annan received much support from every quarter, but everyone accepted his lead and responded to his requests. The result was the remarkable success achieved against almost impossible odds.

Impossible odds are generally faced by all mediation efforts. Miracles do not come easily or too often. If a political deal is reached easily and without painful compromises by all sides, one should not ask if it will unravel, but when. The mediator, therefore, needs all the help he or she can get, and a United Nations mediator in particular needs much help from the Security Council.

That help begins with giving the mediator the time and space he or she needs to work out solutions, to overcome prejudices and to reconcile competing narratives of the conflict. It means resisting pressures to initiate competing mediating efforts and standing firm against pre-cooked or hastily conducted agreements that are imposed from outside or that do not address the core issues. Often, such agreements exclude key parties whose support is needed for the implementation of the agreement, or who do not serve or represent the interests of all the people of the country concerned.

The credibility of the United Nations and the world's faith in its relevance suffer greatly when the mediation of certain conflicts is left unattended for long periods of time, or ignored altogether. That is certainly the perception in many parts of the world with respect to the Middle East peace process and several other conflicts. When the Security Council is perceived to be more concerned about the suffering of some than others, selective in the enforcement of its own resolutions, or employing double standards, the credibility of the United Nations as a whole is affected. The damage to the credibility of United Nations on

some issues will adversely affect its mediation efforts everywhere.

In conclusion, the Organization's universality, its impartiality and its consistent adherence to the principles enshrined in its Charter are the most powerful weapons in a United Nations mediator's arsenal. If you equip your mediators well, if you support them well, then they will be that much more likely to provide the help the victims of war demand and achieve the peace this Council seeks.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Brahimi for his statement.

I invite His Excellency Mr. Martin Torrijos, President of the Republic of Panama, to take the floor.

President Torrijos (*spoke in Spanish*): Panama welcomes this initiative to devote a meeting of the Security Council to mediation and settlement of disputes. This Organization was created specifically to ensure that the types of conflict that have devastated entire continents be addressed in a forum where they could be overcome. On many occasions, the United Nations in general and the Security Council in particular have served only as a podium to denounce an injustice or as an echo chamber so that the world becomes aware of situations that jeopardize international peace and security. On other occasions, the United Nations has spoken out, has urged parties to reach agreement and has even imposed sanctions on those countries that it considers responsible for violating the Charter of the Organization.

On far fewer occasions, the United Nations has assumed the role of mediator to resolve conflicts. This was my country's experience. Throughout almost all of the twentieth century, the United States maintained a colonial enclave in Panama. In 1973, the Security Council met for the second and last time outside of Headquarters in order to convene a meeting in the capital city of Panama. We have no doubt whatsoever that this event raised the world's awareness of the need to put an end to a situation that was in every regard unjust and contrary to the principles enshrined in the Organization's Charter. However, the United Nations restricted itself to a listening role, and the draft resolution that invited the parties to reach an agreement was vetoed. Panama and the United States found other means of negotiation and reached an agreement that allowed my country to regain sovereignty over all of its territory and to assume administration of the Panama Canal on the 31 December 1999.

I underscore this fact, although it is well known, as it is an example of how the United Nations could have acted as a mediator rather than only the recipient of our grievances and requests. Many other conflicts could have been avoided and many lives could have been saved had there been a mechanism for this Organization to mediate effectively. Naturally, one should recall that the strength of mediation does not lie in the design or implementation of mechanisms but rather in the political resolve of parties to reach agreements. It is also true, however, that parties to a conflict are more disposed to mediation if effective mechanisms are in place. In other words, political will and effective mechanisms are two mutually reinforcing elements: when there is greater resolve, the mechanisms will be more effective and when the mechanisms are more effective, then there will be greater political will to use them. Therefore, Panama calls on the Member States of the United Nations and, in particular, on the members of the Security Council, to harness their efforts to reinforce this Organization's role as a mediator and thus to serve fully meet the purpose for which it was created 63 years ago.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now invite His Excellency Mr. Ivo Sanader, Prime Minister of the Republic of Croatia, to take the floor.

Mr. Sanader (Croatia): I am grateful to Burkina Faso for bringing us together to address an important and integral component of our common effort in maintaining international peace and security.

The effectiveness of the United Nations and of this Council in particular is often measured against its ability to prevent and resolve conflicts. In achieving that goal, the Council has at its disposal an array of tools, including those mentioned prominently in Chapter VI of the United Nations Charter. As Croatia's own experience has demonstrated, mediation and the peaceful settlement of disputes are part and parcel of conflict prevention, peacemaking and post-conflict peacebuilding, and can be successfully integrated into the mandates of missions designed by the Council.

Since the nature of contemporary conflict has changed, increasingly shifting from the inter-state to an intra-state level, the United Nations is facing a different set of expectations. As the 2004 report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change

(see A/59/565) noted, the demand for United Nations good offices and mediation has skyrocketed. In situations ranging from Iraq to Sudan, from Cyprus to Côte d'Ivoire, from the Democratic Republic of Congo to Zimbabwe, to mention just a few, the United Nations has been required to be instrumental not only in overcoming tensions between opponents or belligerents but also in offering solutions for transitional justice, constitution writing or designing mechanisms for wealth-sharing or human rights protection.

This involvement may take place on any level, from the Secretary-General himself — or some esteemed colleagues, seated at this table today — to the different United Nations departments and agencies, in particular through the mandates designed by this Council. Even in the absence of a specifically appointed individual, tasked with a mediation or good-offices mandate, through its political or military presence on the ground, the United Nations finds itself engaged in the role of a negotiator, intermediary or adviser. Today, it is difficult to find a Council-mandated mission that does not include some aspect of diplomatic, mediatory, non-coercive engagement, often through the wide-ranging executive authority of the Head of Mission.

Our own experience with the United Nations Transitional Authority in Eastern Slavonia (UNTAES) is a telling example of what the United Nations can accomplish within a well-defined, realistic and achievable mandate. The reintegration of that war-affected territory in eastern Croatia was a joint success, both for my country and the United Nations, and Croatia stands ready to share the expertise and know-how gained through that process.

It has been rightly recognized that, in order to live up to these expectations, Council-mandated missions require not only an effective mandate, but also necessary expertise and adequate resources. The Department of Political Affairs (DPA) remains the centre of expertise and resources on mediation, and we welcome recent steps designed to strengthen it, including the establishment of the DPA Mediation Support Unit. The institution of special envoys and special representatives of the Secretary-General is often the primary channel for action — virtually the face of the United Nations in such situations. The complexity of their tasks requires excellent political, negotiation, leadership and management skills. In that regard, we would welcome the appointment of more women in these positions. No less important than skilled leadership is the development of local capacities for dispute resolution, a process in which civil society can play a crucial role.

The diplomatic and non-coercive methods of settling disputes surely go beyond the framework of the United Nations system and the United Nations can often profit from such synergies. Mediation in resolving the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire was one of those success stories and I would like to join others, Mr. President, in extending my appreciation for the personal effort you invested in facilitating the signature and implementation of the Ouagadougou Agreement between the Ivorian parties.

With the increasing interaction between the Council and regional and subregional organizations, it is becoming evident that they offer a potential which commands the Council's attention, and needs to be further explored by the Council, not only in the field of peacekeeping, but also in the settlement of disputes. The joint effort of the United Nations and the African Union to bring peace to Darfur is a good example, including through the institution of the joint special envoys and the recently appointed Chief Mediator Mr. Djibrill Yipènè Bassolé of Burkina Faso. As was rightly pointed out on previous occasions, their geographical proximity to and familiarity with the context of the conflict often makes regional and subregional organizations well suited to approach the parties to a conflict. We were also heartened by the success of the mediating effort led by the former Secretary-General, His Excellency Kofi Annan, under the auspices of the African Union that helped to resolve a grave political and humanitarian crisis in Kenya this year.

Recent trends give us reason to be hopeful about the Council's ability to further expand and better integrate such efforts into its strategies and actions. Still, for every success like that in Kenya, there are static situations that can dent the credibility of the United Nations and compel us to re-examine our strategies and commitments. We are encouraged by the positive signals coming from Cyprus and extend our full support to the good offices of the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General, Alexander Downer.

We also deeply appreciate the continuing joint effort that the United Nations and African Union are investing in the Darfur talks. On the other hand, it is

disappointing to note that after almost a year of repeated attempts to engage with Myanmar, the United Nations efforts fall short of achieving tangible results.

A well-managed effort aimed at reaching peace through a viable political process should be an integral part of our peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding strategies. However, it should not come at the expense of other values this Organization was founded to promote and protect. Without respect for justice, the rule of law, human rights and basic socio-economic concerns, hope for lasting peace will remain illusory and our action incomplete.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now invite His Excellency Mr. Karel de Gucht, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belgium, to take the floor.

Mr. De Gucht (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): We are fortunate that today's meeting is being presided over by one of the greatest practitioners of conflict mediation and resolution, President Blaise Compaore, whom I wish to congratulate on his initiative. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General and Mr. Brahimi for their statements.

Since mediation normally goes on behind closed doors, opting to talk about it in public may seem like a surprising thing to do. However, the time is right to spotlight its importance. History shows that there is a 50 per cent greater likelihood of resolving a crisis if the instrument of mediation is employed. The rapid deployment of a compact, but well-equipped team of mediators can help to avoid extensive and costly missions. Above all, it could help prevent the atrocities to which all too many innocent men, women and children continue to fall victim.

If we all agree on the advantages of mediation, then why do not we use that instrument so sparingly? Without a doubt, one reason is that international mediation calls for a broad array of talents and instruments: the skill of analysing political processes; knowledge of local situations; the ability to forge links with all parties involved, including the local population; and early warning and rapid reaction mechanisms. Those are some of the qualities and instruments that we need on various levels.

The United Nations clearly has a central role to play in this field. As a non-permanent member of the Security Council, Belgium has made consistent efforts to ensure that the Security Council can effectively assume its responsibility for defusing crises. The Council must sometimes do so discreetly, for it needs to give sufficient space and breathing room to mediation initiatives, and sometimes in a more visible manner, especially if it is in a position to support a mediation effort in a united voice. If such a balance is found, the Council can have a considerable impact, most particularly in support of the Secretary-General's good offices.

In that context, it is difficult to accept the fact that the Secretary-General has such limited resources to act. In many instances, he is reduced to having to appeal to ad hoc arrangements. I hope that we will be able to agree today on the urgent need to shore up his capacity for mediation. Doing so will require the development of a pool of experts who can rely on receiving the resources they require. Such peacekeeping firefighters will have to remain on standby so that, at any time and extremely rapidly, they can offer or even impose their services through their vigorous efforts to address emerging conflicts before it is too late. Belgium fully believes in that, which is why we have made a significant contribution to the Secretariat's Mediation Unit.

Clearly, regional and subregional organizations also have a role to play in conflict mediation and resolution. That is the second dimension that I would like to highlight. I am thinking of the actions undertaken by the French presidency of the European Union in Georgia; the actions taken by South Africa on behalf of the Southern African Development Community in Zimbabwe; of Kofi Annan's initiative in Kenya on behalf of the African Union; of the role of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in Myanmar, where outstanding challenges remain; and of the efforts of your country, Mr. President, in the Sudan.

Thirdly, we must be capable of crossing institutional borders and turning to suitable non-governmental organizations, such as Sant'Egidio, the Carter Center and the Ahtisaari team, which pursue their efforts in numerous places around the world, addressing the civil sector, representatives of the private sector, members of the public.

I am also mindful of women's roles. History has shown that women are often responsible for the success of peace agreements. I would therefore express my hope to see more women included on mediation teams.

In six months time, when we will evaluate the outcome of this debate, I hope that the Member States will have given the Secretary-General the means he needs to make a difference in the field. I hope that regional organizations will be able to contribute to and benefit from that activity and I hope too that the non-governmental organizations will play a core role therein. I am well aware that this is an ambitious programme, but one that is worthy of being enacted.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Nkosazana Clarice Dlamini Zuma, Minister of Foreign Affairs of South Africa.

Ms. Dlamini Zuma (South Africa): We would first like to congratulate Burkina Faso on organizing this debate on mediation and settlement of disputes. Of course, we are pleased to see President Compaore presiding over this meeting. We also thank the Secretary-General and Mr. Brahimi for their informative remarks.

When the African Union was founded a few years ago, there were three broad objectives our leaders had in mind. One of them was the prevention, resolution and management of conflicts that have scarred the African continent for many decades, and thus the establishment of the Peace and Security Council. The second, of course, was the acceleration of political and economic integration, and the third was to reverse the legacy of poverty and underdevelopment that continue to be the biggest challenge of the twenty-first century.

Our subregional organizations were mandated to develop local mediation processes that would help resolve conflicts at the neighbourhood level. Subregional organizations like the Southern African Development Community, the Economic Community of West African States and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development have played and continue to play a major role in the resolution of conflicts in such countries as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, Burundi, the Sudan, Liberia, eastern Uganda and Zimbabwe, to mention a few.

All of our efforts were anchored in the Charter of the United Nations, particularly Article 33 of Chapter VI, which provides for mediation as one of a number of diplomatic methods for the pacific settlement of disputes. Due to the changing profile of global conflicts, wherein more conflicts have become intra-State rather than inter-State, mediation has become an indispensable tool in the prevention and resolution of conflicts. As a result, mediation has become more important than ever before. The Secretary-General, through his good offices, has been engaged in a number of mediation processes internationally. In this regard, the creation of a Mediation Support Unit within the Department of Political Affairs to provide support for these activities is a significant development. Of course, we hope that it will be well resourced.

We acknowledge that there are general principles guiding and underpinning mediation. However, the root causes of the problem, the specificities of the parties in dispute and socio-cultural factors need to be taken into consideration. It is for that reason that the link between peace and development should be central in all efforts towards conflict resolution, prevention and management.

We now wish to share a few lessons learned during mediation in countries, some of which I have mentioned, and also to focus on the important challenges of ownership of the mediation process by the various parties in conflict and on the role of support mechanisms.

One of the questions posed in the concept paper is how mediation can be made effective. In our view, the roles of the interested parties in a mediation process should be clearly defined. Once mediation has been started, it is important that all other parties should play a supportive and constructive role in the process.

Fundamentally, mediation must keep the parties focused on resolving the dispute by arriving at a compromise acceptable to all parties. The role of the mediator is not to impose a solution in the parties but to help them arrive at the solution to end the conflict by themselves. It is crucial that mediators and other interested parties should dispense with what others have called "the rescuer syndrome", referring to a lack of belief that people have neither the ability to resolve disputes themselves nor the expectation that they should do so.

In mediation, those involved in a dispute should be considered to have ownership and responsibility for resolving it. Only through communicating with one another and acknowledging their ownership of their situation will they be able to effectively resolve it.

In the process of mediation, the mediator receives and deals with confidential information and proposals from the disputing parties. It is important for mediation not to be unduly pressured, either to unnecessarily reveal confidential information or to move the process towards already identified conclusions. Furthermore, direct intervention by others taking sides or influencing the parties in dispute can be a major obstacle to the resolution of the dispute. Also, mediation should not take place in the glare of the media.

The test of the success of the mediation should be the durability of the agreements signed or entered into. Therefore, it is important that it be understood that at times the success of a mediation effort cannot be measured in the short term. This process of allowing the parties to find their own solutions tends to be long and painstaking and requires a lot of patience.

It is also important that we address the role of the Security Council in this context. In this regard, we believe that once mediators have been appointed, in particular by regional organizations, the Council's role should be to support the process. As the Council, we should avoid the temptation to pre-empt the outcome of mediation efforts through the use of coercive tools that are at the Council's disposal. Our experience is that, when the Council interferes in the mediation efforts of either the Secretary-General or regional organizations, the results have not always been positive.

In conclusion, we would like to reiterate that regional and subregional organizations have a crucial role to play in mediation and have a comparative advantage, mostly due to proximity. In this regard, we support the strengthening of the Mediation Support Office of the Department of Political Affairs, as that Office will provide much-needed technical support for regional efforts, in particular, but of course not exclusively, on the African continent.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Hassan Wirajuda, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia.

Mr. Wirajuda (Indonesia): Mr. President, at the outset I wish to commend you for organizing today's important debate. I am sure that this meeting, under your able guidance, will be fruitful.

We live in a world torn by conflict. Conflicts are raging in the Middle East, in Afghanistan, in the Americas and in Central Europe, and they will never come to an end if dialogue does not take the place of violence. But dialogue is not easy to bring about between active combatants. There has to be someone trusted by everyone involved to bring about and guide the dialogue: a mediator who must have the skill to guide the process to a just and comprehensive conclusion that is acceptable to all concerned. Mediation as a process and as an art is therefore of immense value to the long-term survival of humankind.

Let me now speak of Indonesia's experience in mediation. In the early to mid-1990s, for three years, I had the personal privilege of chairing the mixed committee that conducted the bulk of negotiations between the Government of the Philippines and the Moro National Liberation Front. The process led to the signing in 1996 of a final peace agreement that ended two decades of a separatist rebellion in the southern Philippines.

Earlier, in the late 1980s, Indonesia launched a process towards the peaceful solution of a decades-long civil war in Cambodia. The process began with a series of informal meetings in Jakarta in which the warring factions participated. It later involved the United Nations as well as 19 nations, and led to the peace agreement signed in Paris in October 1991, and eventually to the rebirth of the Kingdom of Cambodia.

In the early 1990s, Indonesia launched a series of annual informal workshops on managing potential conflict in the South China Sea. There was a danger then that rival and overlapping claims to all or parts of the South China Sea could lead to armed conflict. Hence, Indonesia invited workshop participants from all the claimant States, and the informal process led to joint undertakings that served as confidence-building measures. Since then China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) have adopted a declaration on the conduct of parties in the South China Sea, and the area in general has become much more stable.

Much was achieved in these processes largely because Indonesia, as a non-claimant State, was trusted by all sides. We had only one clear agenda, and that was to ensure for ourselves and for our neighbours a more peaceful environment.

Apart from the fact that we earned the trust of the parties involved, it helped that the process we mediated began with considerable informality and that it was

often conducted away from the limelight of the mass media.

The experience of Indonesia in mediation cannot compare with the vast experience of the United Nations and its many special representatives, special envoys and eminent persons. Supported by a mediation unit, the United Nations can look forward to many more achievements in the service of peace. Properly funded and with the endorsement of Member States, the unit could also enlarge the capacity of the United Nations to detect potential conflicts and prevent their outbreak. The United Nations and regional organizations could team up in mediation efforts. The United Nations has the resources and the experience; regional organizations have intimate knowledge of the socio-political terrain. That combination could be very powerful. We in ASEAN are ready for such a partnership with the United Nations. As we form an ASEAN Community, all ASEAN members are committed to the peaceful resolution of dispute and conflict, including through the use of mediation.

Indonesia is not only committed; it is also a passionate advocate of mediation, for we too have reaped the benefits of successful mediation. There is peace today in our Aceh province because of successful mediation by the Helsinki-based Crisis Management Initiative. Thus, we have learned our lessons in mediation very well. Others in our region and beyond have shown interest in drawing upon those experiences.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now invite His Excellency Mr. Franco Frattini, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Italy, to take the floor.

Mr. Frattini (Italy): First of all, I would like to thank you personally, Mr. President, for having organized this very important high-level meeting.

Italy reaffirms its full support for the action that all United Nations bodies take to prevent conflicts within their respective areas of expertise. The Security Council must strengthen and improve its mechanism for interacting with the Secretary-General and with his representatives and envoys engaged in various Chapter VI actions to settle international disputes. At the same time, parameters and modalities have to be identified to enable mediation to begin at an early stage in order to prevent disputes from degenerating into open conflicts.

The close relationship between peace and security on the one hand, and development, human rights and the rule of law on the other, signifies that the other United Nations bodies also perform mediation activities in a broader sense. In that context, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council have a contribution to make, especially in the definition of general principles. But other bodies, such as the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council, also have a role to play.

Peacebuilding often requires the inclusion of important aspects of mediation in a political stabilization process, namely, the implementation phase of peace agreements. The special procedures of the Human Rights Council — rapporteurs, independent experts, et cetera — can also be deployed to define aspects such as respect for human rights and free and fair elections, which are often vital to the success of mediation efforts. The Secretary-General has a leading role in that field. That is why Italy supports the initiative to strengthen the Secretariat's mediation capacity, in particular through the expansion of the Department of Political Affairs and the creation of a Mediation Support Unit within the Department.

The capacities of regional organizations should be strengthened by promoting the conclusion of agreements between them and the United Nations. We would support having the Security Council invite the mediators appointed by regional organizations to report on their activities in this forum on a more frequent basis. As members are well aware, the European Union was one of the first organizations to work to ensure and provide effective cooperation with the United Nations.

One particularly effective modality is the appointment of joint mediators holding mandates from both the relevant regional organization and the United Nations. The advantage of such a figure is twofold: he or she will be more knowledgeable about local realities and thus better able to influence the negotiating process; at the same time, because the mediation has been placed under the aegis of the United Nations, it comes to represent the international community as a whole and thus gains in terms of universal legitimization and political support.

On the basis of the experience that Italy has gained since the early 1990s — for example, through our action in Mozambique — we believe that one of the keys to successful mediation is the active role of

civil society. When strongly rooted in the territory or interacting effectively with the parties to the conflict, non-governmental organizations can make a unique contribution. Forms of concrete interaction, including on the part of the Security Council, with such stakeholders can be reinvigorated in the light of already consolidated experiences.

In the context of civil society's contribution, close attention should be paid to the role of women, as Minister de Gucht very rightly said. The Security Council has often acknowledged that role, pursuant to resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security.

Finally, Italian experience has taught us that mediation does not stop with the negotiation of a peace agreement; the agreement must then be implemented. We could call such activity micro-mediation with the interested parties. It is pertinent to the action of peacekeeping contingents, for example, which interact in the field with the parties concerned on a daily basis. In this case, it is a question of settling a wide variety of problems — ranging from humanitarian assistance to the organization of elections or the protection of minorities — that often closely affect the issues or interests at the root of the conflict.

In conclusion, that is why I guarantee the strong support of Italy for the draft presidential statement that we are about to adopt.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now invite His Excellency Mr. Bernard Kouchner, Minister for Foreign Affairs of France, to take the floor.

Mr. Kouchner (France) (*spoke in French*): After listening to preceding speakers, I obviously wish to discuss something that might be a bit prickly — everyone is tempted to do so: the roles that we have been able to play in the various mediations that we have encountered. In that context, I wish to commend the Burkina Faso presidency. I wish to pay tribute to President Compaore for the eminent role that he has played and, taking advantage of his absence, to commend the effectiveness of his mediation on many occasions, particularly in Côte d'Ivoire and Togo.

I also wish to commend Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, because I perceived the technician and the man of commitment in his statement. He was quite right when he spoke of the slowness required to attain an objective quietly yet swiftly. Bravo! That takes time.

In addition, I welcome what my friend Franco Frattini said, because the role of women and, in particular, of civil society — which was also referred to by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium — is essential.

Let me say that to give a scientific aspect of mediation is very praiseworthy, but there is something intangible, perhaps invented on the fly, in analyzing a situation, maybe a bit of spontaneity or chance — a terrible chance to take sometimes. We do not really know why we make a mistake, but we know we will make mistakes, but sometimes a door opens and the chance works out.

I would like to recall that 60 years ago Count Bernadotte was sent as the first mediator of the United Nations in order "to promote a peaceful adjustment of the future status in Palestine", and we are still at it. These ambitions were stymied, the Council will recall, by an act of terrorism in which Bernadotte and his French military counsel Serot were assassinated. Folke Bernadotte was the first United Nations mediator, but also the first representative of the United Nations to give his life in an attempt to find a solution through dialogue and cooperation. Since then, other well-known United Nations mediators, and others who were less well known and were invisible, have also paid — I should, obviously, cite Dag Hammarskjöld and Sergio Vieira de Mello — and have given their lives for peace.

The beginning we know; the end we do not know; it belongs to all of us. It is a long movement. Today's debate allows us to honour those efforts and emphasize our support for the United Nations role in providing solutions to difficult problems through negotiations. I spoke of Palestine, where that is still the case, and we speak of Darfur, which is always the case.

I wish to emphasize three points very quickly. Mediation is at the heart of diplomatic and political activity. Some doubt that. Diplomacy is often criticized, but the good offices allow us to convey messages among parties that no longer dialogue. Mediation offers a solution, a compromise, to move beyond a hardened situation. Those initiatives are the instruments, the reflexes, of heads of State and politicians working for peace. It is not enough; know-how is needed, personal qualities, the ability to adapt according to the balance of forces and especially the ability to remain legitimate and credible — that is the most difficult thing.

We are all tempted; we have all done it, wanting to give a small advantage where there should not be one. We are all tempted to say that one is right and the other is wrong. That is impossible; it will not work. If I had the time — which I don't — I would tell the Council of the temptation we had, the French presidency of the European Union, a few days ago to attempt to bring forward a somewhat positive mediation in the problem in the Caucuses between Georgia and Russia. That could be an example, one not achieved, and perhaps it would be a bit pretentious to emphasize the necessary efforts.

So the establishment of a mediation support unit and a team of experts in key areas of mediation is certainly progress, but it is a little bit like humanitarian affairs. At the start it was a great surprise and everybody approved it. Then it became like university teaching, but it is not the same thing.

Further, with regard to humanitarian affairs, I am sitting next to the Croatian Prime Minister. In mediation I would say that there is humanitarian mediation that is necessary to enable humanitarian access — I am thinking about Dubrovnik, Mr. Prime Minister. Let us not forget that not everything is political, or everything is political, in humanitarian affairs also. Humanitarianism used to be trendy; it is much less so now, and that is too bad.

There are many examples of United Nations successes — El Salvador, Cambodia, Namibia, Guatemala, Burundi, etc. We should emphasize them, for they are quickly forgotten. When things do not work, everyone criticizes the United Nations — "What is the United Nations doing?" When they do work, we forget everything in a moment. The list of United Nations mediation successes over the last 20 years, especially since the end of the cold war, is considerable. When we criticize the United Nations, we must also think of its successes.

Regional organizations and actors play a growing role in mediation. I could emphasize the Organization of American States in Haiti, the Pacific Islands Forum, the African Union, etc. Those are essential organizations. The European Union over the past few years has also strengthened its mediation in the Balkans — Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo, prisoner exchanges, Croatia, etc. Everyone knows that story. More broadly, the European Union is prepared to offers its support and mediation for the peace process in the Middle East in particular. The EU believes, somewhat legitimately, that the association of its 27 countries can play a political role in some areas and that it is not used enough. It is used more for giving money than for mediation. We have experience, and it has not always been negative.

The second point is that mediation must be part of a comprehensive approach to a crisis. That is a very political matter, not just a sixth sense, or tactics. If there is no comprehensive regional approach — I would say even almost global — then it is very difficult to achieve progress. While the distinction exists, we should not become blocked in a logic of separation between Chapter VII and Chapter VI. I would recall that every decision of the Security Council is mandatory. Sanctions can be a tool for mediation and conflict settlement, of course, but when the international community refuses dialogue with terrorists or war criminals, maybe then sanctions are necessary. There is a whole debate on that, and honestly, we have had positive and negative examples. When some refuse to enter a peace process, they must be brought to negotiate and to cooperate. For example, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, there are sanctions against persons who are "impeding disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration".

On the boundaries of the peaceful settlement of disputes and coercion, peacekeeping operations maintain a stabilizing presence on the ground, which in some cases could be mobilized in support of efforts for dialogue. Because the mandate is in principle the conclusion of a peace agreement, mediators are often the messengers of the international community's reinvestment in a theatre of crisis. Actions must be taken quickly. In the critical weeks that follow the announcement of peace, the international community must support still-fragile national institutions and allow them to answer the critical needs of the people and to help exit — an important word — the crisis.

We talked about mediation. We spoke — and I did not say "interference"; it is forbidden, of course — of the responsibility to protect. It is not very credible here, but I will use the term. However, I will tell you that we do not have enough of a school for crisis emergence. Nation-building is not really taught. I think it is necessary, when we talk about mediation, to emphasize that that should be followed by a deployment that could last for years, even a generation.

When we begin a mediation effort and that effort is successful, let us not forget that it is impossible to determine a real date when the crisis ends.

I wanted to emphasize those three small points. We should, of course, pursue efforts to better coordinate the actions of the international community from the start, the early warning — always too late — and the international community's efforts — always too late — until the end of the crisis, which is never really predictable.

The President (*spoke in French*): I invite the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, His Excellency Mr. Alexander Yakovenko, to take the floor.

Mr. Yakovenko (*spoke in Russian*): I am grateful to the President of Burkino Faso, Mr. Blaise Compaore, for convening such a timely meeting of the Security Council.

Since the topic of today's discussion is mediation and settlement of disputes, I cannot fail to mention the mediation role of the President of France, Nicolas Sarkozy. I thank his presidency of the European Union and his sobering influence on the Georgian leadership. The President of France ably fulfilled his principal function as a mediator in the achievement of a preliminary settlement that, I hope, will help to ensure regional stability.

In consideration of the theoretical background of mediation, I note that a mediator normally does his or her utmost to work out preliminary arrangements based on areas in which the parties can agree. The implementation of those agreements should lead in turn to a definitive and lasting settlement of the conflict. The events in the Caucasus have demonstrated that modern conflicts cannot be solved by the use of force. In that regard, we have always insisted on the agreement on the non-use of force between Tbilisi, Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

The mediator acting in good faith should possess a number of qualities. For instance, he or she should be impartial so as not to undermine the confidence of the parties; above all, the mediator should observe strict confidentiality. Unilateral decisions should not be imposed nor should reason be given to believe that the mediator is biased towards or has preferences for one of the parties. A mediator's failure to meet any one of those requirements inevitably creates problems. There are ample examples of that, but it is enough to recall the evolution of the Kosovo settlement.

Recent events throughout the world demonstrate that the role of mediators in dispute settlement is on the increase. Let me mention just a few. As a result of mediation, the conflicts in Africa have become less intense, the Democratic Republic of East Timor has been established, a settlement has been achieved in Aceh, and United Nations-mediated talks between the parties to the conflict in Cyprus have been engaged. Lastly, a comprehensive political agreement has been achieved in Zimbabwe through the mediation of the President of the Republic of South Africa.

I believe that all present here will agree that the activity of mediators requires great skill and is the product of a combination of persistence, tact, knowledge of the historic, cultural and other specifics of a conflict, and — no less important — patience. The mediator, even if compelled at times to be tough, should not use gross interference or violate the legitimate rights or interests of any of the parties. It is necessary to work patiently towards a result acceptable to all parties to the conflict and not be tempted to make hasty decisions in search of momentary political dividends.

Experience in conflict settlement to date clearly demonstrates that only the mediator who does not rely on violence or the imposition of terms of settlement but seeks instead to reconcile the positions of the parties, find areas of convergence and reach mutually acceptable understandings has a chance of succeeding. On the basis of the aforementioned principles, Russia participates in mediation or decides to support relevant efforts of the United Nations or other international or regional organizations.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Lord Mark Malloch-Brown, Minister of State for Africa, Asia and United Nations Affairs of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Lord Malloch-Brown (United Kingdom): I should like to start by joining those who have thanked President Compaore for convening this debate. We have a lot to learn from his own experience in his successful mediation in Togo and Côte d'Ivoire.

But I think today we have benefited from a wealth of knowledge and direct experience around this

table. Not just our friend Lakhdar Brahimi, but so many foreign ministers and the Secretary-General have contributed with their own experiences, alongside other leaders who have spoken. In fact, it strikes me that everybody who has spoken at this table today has arrived at their seat at the table, not insignificantly, through their own direct experience as mediators. Thus, in some ways this has almost been more like a mediators' workshop than a normal meeting of the Security Council. I think that is a tribute to the President for convening this debate today. It does help us put an international spotlight on what can be done to ensure that the international community's mediation efforts are more effective in helping to resolve conflict.

A recent study showed that more than 90 per cent of recent conflicts were resolved by mediation, not by victory on the battlefield. Of course, failure to generate durable peace agreements leads all too often to a resumption of war. Conflict costs Africa an estimated $18 billion a year — a figure it can obviously ill afford as a region.

The United Nations is playing an increasingly important role in mediation efforts, as of course is the African Union (AU). The 2005 World Summit pointed to the need to build the United Nations mediation capacity, and we welcome the establishment of the Mediation Support Unit. There is more to be done, however, to give the United Nations the flexibility and resources it needs. In that regard, the United Kingdom supports the strengthening of the Department of Political Affairs by the General Assembly. It is also critical to build the capacities of regional organizations, and we welcome the AU's 10-year capacity-building programme. It has an important role to play, as we saw earlier this year in Kenya, Côte d'Ivoire and elsewhere.

We should remind ourselves of successful mediation efforts undertaken in recent months. It was under AU auspices, but with strong United Nations support, that Kofi Annan led the international community's efforts in Kenya, as Mr. Brahimi described. The current Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, played a critical role in Burma after Cyclone Nargis. He worked closely with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and other partners in the region to broker a deal with the Government that allowed aid to flow to survivors. We applaud the Secretary-General's strong leadership and continue to offer our full support for his engagement on Burma. We hope that the United Nations, ASEAN and the broader international community can bring the same unity of purpose and dynamism to bear in breaking the political deadlock in that country. The Council has made its expectations of the Burmese regime clear. We should remain united in demanding a fair and transparent political process there, beginning with the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. While we welcome the release today of a veteran journalist and close associate of hers, U Win Tin, we cannot forget the 1,000 or so political prisoners who remain in captivity and the ongoing arrests of political activists. We hope that all will be released.

We welcome the appointment of Mr. Bassolé as the joint AU-United Nations Chief Mediator on Darfur. He has our full support as he seeks to build a political process to address a conflict which remains the most serious challenge facing this Council. He should be at the centre of the process, providing support and encouragement and pulling together all the parties, both local and international. At the same time, we call on the Government of the Sudan to cooperate substantially on all aspects of the Darfur problem and to create the conditions in which mediation stands a chance of succeeding.

The agreement between Morgan Tsvangirai and Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe was the product of a long and difficult mediation effort led by President Mbeki, with the support of the United Nations and the AU. We welcome the agreement. We want it to work. It offers the prospect of a new path towards political stability and recovery for Zimbabwe, which has been blighted by appalling governance for so many years. What is crucial now is action on the ground. The new Government should be formed as soon as possible, and we are ready to provide generous financial support to that Government as we see evidence of it introducing real and credible reforms. The challenge of improving the lives of ordinary Zimbabweans begins now.

Those are all recent examples of mediation at work. We need to learn the right lessons from them. Mediation requires strong and capable leadership, a coherent international effort in support of that leadership, and the resources to make sure it can deliver. But we should not see mediation in isolation. Today's debate builds on the Council's debates in April on peace and security in Africa and in May on post-conflict peacebuilding, under the presidencies of South Africa and the United Kingdom, respectively. Peace

agreements have too often fallen apart. That is often due to the lack of an implementation plan, but also because we do not have the right linkages between mediation processes and the critical recovery and peacebuilding phase.

That is why we believe so strongly that we need to build coherence across the conflict spectrum. That should be a theme of the reports commissioned on the basis of these Security Council debates. Through these we can not only improve the effectiveness of mediation and ensure that the agreements reached are sustained, but also, I hope, strengthen the role of the Security Council through each phase of conflict prevention, the mediation of conflicts, conflict resolution and the implementation of peace agreements — as well, of course, when mediation fails, of the peacekeeping process itself.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now invite His Excellency Mr. Le Luong Minh, Permanent Representative of Viet Nam, to take the floor.

Mr. Le Luong Minh (Viet Nam): I thank you, Mr. President, and the delegation of Burkina Faso for having taken the initiative to organize this high-level Security Council debate on the issue of mediation and settlement of disputes.

States Members of the United Nations, an Organization which was established to save mankind from the scourge of war, commit themselves through the Charter to settling international disputes by peaceful means. Also through the Charter they define concrete means of pacific settlement of disputes, which include mediation, and they entrust the Council with the responsibility to promote the use of those means. Mediation, a customary mode of dispute settlement, has been codified in contemporary international law and has been developed through practice at all levels — bilateral, regional and multilateral — particularly under the sponsorship of the United Nations.

Viet Nam notes with appreciation that mediation has been increasingly employed as an effective tool in resolving disputes and conflicts. Many successful mediation efforts have been made by the United Nations and by regional and subregional organizations. In recent decades, the search for solutions to the conflicts in the Middle East, Cambodia, Haiti, Angola, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, the Sudan and, most recently, South Ossetia and Zimbabwe, to mention a few, has vividly testified to the effectiveness of these good-offices and mediation activities.

With the establishment in 2006 of the Mediation Support Unit within the Department of Political Affairs of the Secretariat, the United Nations has devoted further attention to mediation activities. We welcome the appointment by the Secretary-General of Mr. Djibril Bassolé, former Foreign Minister of Burkina Faso, as joint African Union-United Nations Chief Mediator for Darfur, and we hope that Mr. Bassolé, with his rich knowledge and experience, will, by means of mediation, make a substantial contribution to bringing about a peaceful, comprehensive and lasting solution to the Darfur conflict.

As a Member of the United Nations, Viet Nam is steadfastly committed to the principle of the peaceful settlement of international disputes. We support every effort to settle disputes by peaceful means, including mediation, in accordance with national law and the United Nations Charter. We hold that, to produce lasting solutions, mediation must be conducted with full respect for national independence and sovereignty and the territorial integrity of States. It must be impartial and non-coercive and must have the consent and full participation of all parties concerned.

As a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), whose success owes much to its adherence to the principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes, Viet Nam is doing and will continue to do its utmost to contribute to mediation efforts aimed at finding peaceful solutions to situations of dispute among ASEAN member States, in accordance with the Association's Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia.

My delegation believes that this debate provides a timely opportunity for the Council to take stock of the successful and failed experiences of mediation endeavours in various parts of the world, to assess the significance and conditions of United Nations activities and mechanisms related to mediation as well as the roles of existing subregional and regional mediation mechanisms, and to explore avenues for improving the effectiveness of mediation efforts and the role of the United Nations, in particular the Security Council, in mediation processes. We therefore support the agreed conclusions of the Security Council contained in the draft presidential statement on this topic.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now invite His Excellency Mr. Zalmay Khalilzad, Permanent Representative of the United States of America, to take the floor.

Mr. Khalilzad (United States of America): On behalf of the United States, I would like to congratulate President Compaore and the delegation of Burkina Faso on highlighting the importance of mediation and the settlement of disputes. Burkina Faso has played a vital role in helping to bring peace to conflicts throughout Africa. And, as others have noted, President Compaore personally has been active as a mediator in regional conflicts. In 2006, the President served as mediator of the inter-Togolese dialogue, which resulted in an agreement between the Government and opposition parties. He also served as mediator in the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire, brokering the peace agreement that was signed in March 2007. We thank President Compaore for his many contributions.

Furthermore, the appointment of former Burkinabé Foreign Minister Bassole as the new joint United Nations-African Union Chief Mediator for the Darfur conflict is the most recent contribution by Burkina Faso in assisting in negotiating peace. Minister Bassole's mission has the potential to re-energize the peace process, and we support his efforts.

The United States has favoured the strengthening of mechanisms of the international community for mediation and the peaceful settlement of disputes. The United States has strongly supported the role of the Security Council in helping to prevent disputes from escalating into dangerous conflict. Over the past several years, the United States has been pressing in the Security Council for action to deal with threats to international peace and security that have emerged, including supporting the adoption of Security Council resolution 1625 (2005), a declaration on the need to strengthen the effectiveness of the Security Council's role in conflict prevention, particularly in Africa.

The United States welcomes the statement of the Secretary-General and his report of January 2008 (S/2008/18), stating that a culture of conflict prevention is taking hold at the United Nations, and that "the commitment to building and mainstreaming its tools has taken root" (*para. 2*).

The United States has invested heavily in supporting conflict prevention through early warning, conflict assessment and efforts to promote early response. These investments have strengthened the conflict prevention capabilities of the United States and have resulted in increased coordination with the efforts of regional organizations, such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union.

The international community must continue to work to strengthen and deepen the pool of potential international mediators and facilitators. For example, ECOWAS has established a Council of the Wise. Members of that group of experienced statesmen and diplomats from the region have already had successes in mediating in member countries. The United States believes that there is even greater potential for that organization to work within the region, and is developing training programmes and other forms of support for the group.

We believe that successful dispute resolution requires that States be active and politically engaged in seeking a settlement. It is not enough to turn a problem over to international organizations and hope that after a time a solution will emerge. Such formal resolution mechanisms have a vital role to play and can be a decisive factor in resolving disputes, but in the most serious crises there is no substitute for the application of political will and energy by States. Sometimes, States may find that an ad hoc mechanism is the most effective way forward. We believe that formal negotiations and mediation, where States must engage fully and inclusively and real political effort must be expended, are often the best way to address the most serious international disputes.

We have wholeheartedly embraced the perspective of Article 33 of the United Nations Charter, which suggests an array of resolution mechanisms to disputing parties. The United States also strongly supports the work of the Peacebuilding Commission, as it embodies all aspects of the work of the United Nations — peace, development and human rights. By integrating them into one coherent approach, the United Nations helps to close gaps in the international response to countries emerging from conflict. The work of the Peacebuilding Commission will help keep countries from falling back into conflict. The Peacebuilding Fund has provided catalytic support not only to Burundi and Sierra Leone, but also to the Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea.

In closing, I wish to reiterate that the United States is firmly committed to United Nations Charter principles for resolving international disputes peacefully, including the importance of mediation. We are not wedded to any particular theory of how that should be done. Instead, we believe in a pragmatic approach and believe in the need to rely upon those mechanisms and mediators that can best reduce, manage or resolve disputes.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency, Mr. Giadalla A. Ettalhi, Permanent Representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.

Mr. Ettalhi (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): It was a great honour for us to see His Excellency Mr. Blaise Compaore, President of the Republic of Burkina Faso, presiding over our Council and managing our work, following the able leadership of our colleague Ambassador Michel Kafando. We are also honoured by the presence of our other distinguished guests.

Today's meeting adds value and special importance to our deliberations and falls within the framework of the efforts and firm determination of President Compaore and the other leaders of Africa to achieve lasting security, without which our continent will not enjoy sustainable development.

The concept paper that the delegation of Burkina Faso has prepared focuses on mediation as a means to settle disputes that is given special priority in Article 33 of the United Nations Charter and is reaffirmed by the Statute of the African Union and many other texts. The option of mediation offers ideas and proposals to urge the parties to a dispute to resort to dialogue. At minimum cost, either before or after a conflict breaks out, mediation can ensure that the parties find a way to end it and to build and maintain peace. Mediation that takes the interests and requirements of local parties into account is appropriate to the situation in Africa in particular and the international situation in general, especially since the end of the cold war and the subsequent search for consensus solutions.

Moreover, neither the non-binding nature of mediation, compared to other peaceful means of settlement, nor the fact that mediation may not achieve its objectives in all cases undermines its importance, because mediation allows the parties to re-evaluate or reconsider their positions and thus to move forward in their efforts to reach a sustainable peaceful settlement to conflict.

There is no doubt that the effectiveness of mediation rests not only upon the impartiality of the mediator and his skills and knowledge of the geographical, historical and cultural framework of the conflict and its root causes, but also on the unity and coordination of regional and international efforts. That has been affirmed by international and African reports and documents on African conflicts and on the strategies and means for managing them.

Allow me to state frankly nevertheless that we are still far from implementing our obligations and the recommendations offered in those documents, nor have we yet achieved an international African partnership that integrates resources and capabilities and renounces circumstantial, partial and expensive approaches in favour of comprehensive long-term solutions. That has become bitterly clear from my country's experience with mediation initiatives over the past decades.

Much remains to be done and there are still structures and mechanisms that require development. The noble efforts of the Secretariat and its resources are still inadequate to the logistical and planning support needed to enhance African capabilities and in light of the diplomatic efforts that the African continent has witnessed from the establishment of the Organization of African Unity in the 1960s to this very day.

We must reconsider the existing approach in light of the lessons of the past and support mediation efforts that would eliminate or at least alleviate human suffering and the international system and the power of the Security Council as the main guardian of international peace and security. Therefore, the African Union, with its dynamism and growing capabilities and the will and determination of its leaders, can be a model for United Nations ties with regional organizations and the maintenance of international peace and security in a regional context. That is what we hope.

In closing, Mr. President, I would like to thank your country's delegation for preparing the draft presidential statement. We support it fully and look forward to adopting it at the end of this session.

The President (*spoke in French*): I call on His Excellency Mr. Jorge Urbina, Permanent Representative of Costa Rica.

Mr. Urbina (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to begin my statement, Sir, by recognizing your country's leadership in mediation and the peaceful settlement of disputes on the African continent. I also wish to join others in thanking you and your delegation for convening this meeting, as well as for the concept paper that you provided us with to guide our discussion this afternoon. I wish to respectfully welcome the presence among us today of Mr. Brahimi, whose work and experience are a key part of this Organization.

Costa Rica's statement at this debate will address the activities of the United Nations Organization in the field of mediation and the settlement of disputes. However, we feel compelled to bear in mind the role played by the regional organizations that make valiant efforts to prevent conflicts and resolve disputes on all continents, as has been affirmed in recent weeks by the interventions of the Southern African Development Community in Zimbabwe, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in Thailand and Cambodia, the Organization of American States in Bolivia, and the European Union in the conflict in Georgia.

Over seven years ago, the Secretary-General submitted his first report (S/2001/574) on the prevention of armed conflict, in which he urged us to move from a culture of crisis response to one of crisis prevention. That transition, however, is incomplete. The States Members of the Organization have been unable to reach agreement on allocating indispensable resources for the Organization to work towards conflict prevention, in terms of well-designed prevention that would address the operational, structural and systemic aspects that were identified by the Secretary-General in his second report (A/60/891)on that subject, in 2006.

Clearly, the subject of conflict prevention concerns all Members. Therefore, we should redouble our efforts to strengthen the Organization's capacity for preventive diplomacy, so as to overcome, once and for all, the obstacles that to date have made that impossible. As the saying goes, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. In that regard, the idea of allocating 2 per cent of the annual peacekeeping budget to strengthening the capacity for preventive diplomacy, as the Secretary-General has suggested, merits urgent consideration by Member States.

The exponential increase in the peacekeeping budget is an unequivocal sign of the very limited capacity of the United Nations to prevent the burgeoning of conflicts that endanger international peace and security. The $7 billion spent on peacekeeping over the current biennium stand in contrast to the scant resources that the Member States have approved for conflict prevention endeavours. Clearly, that situation must be remedied.

Costa Rica believes those who are opposed to increasing the preventive capacity of the Organization by claiming other priorities are wrong. There will always be important issues, but none are as important as preserving the possibility for every human being to live in a peaceful environment. Nor can we accept opposition by those who consider the necessary follow-up to conflict prevention to be a mechanism of foreign interference. Even more unacceptable is opposition based purely on budgetary grounds. Not rectifying that situation would be a mistake that we would all continue to pay for.

This is also an opportunity to exchange ideas on the context within which the actions of the Secretary-General are couched. Greater proactivity is needed in developing the institutional capacity to prevent conflicts. The good offices of external actors to neutralize sources of friction within a society or between States have proved to be a necessary and useful instrument. However, quite often that tool does not deliver the expected dividends owing to the constraints of its context. At times, poor coordination with regional or subregional initiatives undermines the effectiveness of good offices.

On other occasions, coordination with other organs of the Organization weakens the effectiveness of the good offices of the Secretariat, in particular in the light of the obstruction that can derive from its relationship with the Security Council.

Here, we believe it important to emphasize the huge value of proximity and impartiality in ensuring the successful outcome of good offices actions. For that reason, we consider it important for the United Nations to focus on strengthening regional organizations, so that they can participate effectively in the peaceful settlement of disputes before such disputes become a threat to international peace and security to be addressed by the Security Council.

The Secretary-General must have a margin to act that is as broad as possible, so as to carry out his good offices functions. That is stipulated in Article 100 of the Charter, which guarantees the total independence of the Secretariat from every State and obliges all States to respect its international character and not to seek to influence it in the discharge of its responsibilities.

In that regard, Costa Rica believes it important to distinguish between those situations in which the Secretary-General acts of his own accord or at the request of the interested parties, and those situations in which he acts at the request of the Security Council. In the former, the main obligation is to the parties and, therefore, discretion is a valued asset. From our experience, we know that that can create tension with the Council or with some of its members. However, we also know that, in some cases, allowing the Secretariat to stand back and act as an impartial and discreet broker, untethered by the political dynamic of the Security Council, is of great value in maintaining international peace and security. Clearly, when good offices are part of the mandate given by the Council, the priority is the effectiveness of the mission as a whole.

To sum up, Sir, your delegation's convening of this important debate must provide the opportunity to rectify the situation. Costa Rica welcomes the proposal of the Secretary-General and will support any efforts to develop greater institutional capacity that is geared towards the prevention and peaceful solution of conflicts. My country will also support the strengthening of links with regional and subregional organizations and any initiative geared towards increasing their capacity to mediate and resolve the disputes that arise within their geographic scope of action.

In addition, we call on the Secretary-General to keep up his efforts in terms of crisis anticipation and to offer to mediate for the sake of maintaining international peace and security, the irreplaceable mainstay for the greater well-being of all.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now invite His Excellency Mr. Liu Zhenmin, the representative of China, to take the floor.

Mr. Liu Zhenmin (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I congratulate Burkina Faso on its assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month. I was pleased to see President Compaore presiding over today's meeting. I wish to welcome the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, to this meeting and to thank him for his statement. I wish also to welcome Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi.

As clearly stated in Article 33 of the Charter of the United Nations, mediation is an important instrument for the peaceful settlement of disputes. How to maintain international peace and security more effectively by means of mediation is a question that is receiving increasing attention from the international community. Here, I would like to express my appreciation to Burkina Faso for taking the initiative to convene this meeting.

For many years, the United Nations has played an important role in mediation and the settlement of disputes. I wish to emphasize the following with regard to how the international community can make better use of mediation in the search of solutions to disputes.

First, the Security Council should give more attention and greater play to its role in preventive diplomacy. The Council has always had a primary focus on peacekeeping and has authorized the deployment of a great number of peacekeeping missions. In fact, to defuse potential conflicts by such preventive means as mediation costs far less and produces much better results than deploying peacekeeping operations after conflicts erupt. In the future, the Council should follow with close attention matters that are brought to it by Member States and the Secretary-General, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter, and should work out a comprehensive preventive strategy in light of the particular circumstances of each crisis.

Secondly, mediators should remain neutral. The international community should back them up with constructive support. Facts have shown that neutrality and fairness constitute the basic conditions for successful mediation. When its integrity is tainted by self-interest or compromised by partiality in favour of one party over the other, mediation can in no way bring about lasting peace. On the contrary, it will only further complicate the situation. Mediators should also have an in-depth understanding of the history and reality of the situation in question and respect the views of all the parties concerned in order to come up with solutions that are relevant and operable.

With regard to factions that are intransigent in their resistance to mediation, States that have influence

over them should do their part to collaborate with the efforts of the mediators.

Thirdly, the United Nations should give vigorous support to the African Union and African subregional organizations in their mediation efforts. In recent years, African regional and subregional organizations such as the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States and the Southern Africa Development Community have made unremitting efforts in the mediation and settlement of African conflicts and have achieved positive results in Côte d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, Burundi and Zimbabwe. China calls upon the United Nations to respond more positively to the reasonable requests of Africa, give high priority to capacity-building in its cooperation with Africa and enhance cooperation with the African Union and subregional organizations in the fields of training, institution-building, information and experience sharing and logistical support, where the United Nations enjoys an advantage. China further calls upon the United Nations to implement effectively the 10-year capacity-building programme between the United Nations and the African Union and mobilize other international donors to provide more support to Africa.

Important as it is for the settlement of disputes, mediation is not a panacea. In many cases, it can only build a bridge between the parties concerned. While it may not be able to build up trust and goodwill among various parties, it can serve to dispel suspicion and misunderstanding. While it may not be able to lead to peace, it can serve to avoid conflict. Real solutions require all parties concerned to demonstrate good faith and meet each other halfway. Fundamentally, a lasting settlement of any dispute requires an integrated approach that includes parallel efforts to achieve economic development, reduce poverty, enhance administrative capacity, advocate the culture of reconciliation and promote judicial justice.

China always stands for the proper settlement of disputes by peaceful means such as mediation, dialogue and negotiations, and supports the efforts made by the United Nations, regional organizations and the countries concerned to that end. China will continue to take a responsible approach and play a constructive role in addressing relevant hotspot issues.

The President (*spoke in French*): After consultations among members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council recalls the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and reaffirms its commitment to the pacific settlement of disputes, including through mediation, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations, in particular Chapter VI. The Council recalls all its relevant previous statements and resolutions.

"The Security Council underlines the importance of mediation as a means of pacific settlement of disputes, and encourages the further use of this mechanism in the settlement of disputes. The Council reaffirms the crucial role of the United Nations in this regard.

"The Security Council affirms that, as the organ with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, it has a responsibility to promote and support mediation as an important means for the pacific settlement of disputes.

"The Security Council emphasizes the importance of the actions undertaken by the Secretary-General, in using his good offices and his representatives, special envoys, and United Nations mediators in promoting mediation and in the pacific settlement of disputes. The Council takes note of the establishment of the Department of Political Affairs Mediation Support Unit, which provides expertise for supporting the mediation efforts of the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations.

"The Security Council requests the Secretary-General to continue to ensure that mediation processes conducted by or under the auspices of the United Nations are guided by the purposes and principles of the Organization and that mediators are experienced, impartial, have a good knowledge of all the stakeholders, facts and circumstances of any dispute to which they have been assigned, and are provided with the necessary support and flexibility to approach mediation according to the specificities of the disputes; to this end, the Council encourages the Secretary-General to consider ways to strengthen the Secretariat's capabilities.

"The Security Council notes the important contribution of regional and subregional organizations, civil society and other stakeholders to the pacific settlement of disputes, in particular through mediation, and commends them for their efforts. The Council is resolved to strengthen United Nations support to such mediation efforts through improved cooperation, in particular in Africa; the Council encourages other bilateral and multilateral partners to do likewise.

"The Security Council underlines the importance of engaging the potential and the existing capacities and capabilities of regional and subregional organizations in mediation efforts, and welcomes the promotion of regional approaches to the pacific settlement of disputes.

"The Security Council notes that women have an important role to play in the settlement of disputes, stresses the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, and calls upon the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the heads of regional and subregional organizations to take into account the gender aspect during mediators' selection, as well as the approach and perspective that women can render in mediation processes.

"The Security Council highlights the importance of considering peacebuilding and recovery requirements in the mediation process to help build the foundations for sustainable peace, and stresses that the Peacebuilding Commission has a role to play in the promotion of mediation.

"The Security Council emphasizes the need to ensure the coherence of mediation processes by or under the auspices of the United Nations, through the improved coordination of efforts with others actors, including regional and subregional organizations, in order to enhance the effectiveness of international efforts.

"The Security Council also stresses that no mediation initiative can be viable without ownership and full involvement of all relevant parties to the dispute throughout the process. The Council reaffirms that conflict prevention and pacific settlement of disputes should be at the core of mediation efforts.

"The Security Council requests the Secretary-General to submit, within six months of the adoption of this statement, a report on mediation and its support activities, which takes into account experiences of the United Nations and other key actors, and makes recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of United Nations mediation."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2008/36.

I would like to thank all the participants for their contributions to this meeting. My thanks go particularly to all the heads of State or Government, ministers and other representatives, and to the Secretary-General.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on the agenda.

The meeting rose at 5.20 p.m.